

AUTOMOTIVE

BMW offers leather-free cars in brand first

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An optional, vegan interior lowers supply chain CO2 emissions by 85 percent, bringing the brand closer to its goal of carbon neutrality. Image credit: BMW

By LUXURY DAILY NEWS SERVICE

German automaker **BMW** is looking toward the future with its next product launch.

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The company announced that its first cars with a vegan, leather-free interior will release to the public later in 2023. The optional material choice lowers surface CO2 emissions by 85 percent, bringing BMW closer to its carbon neutrality ambitions.

"We are testing how these innovative materials can be combined and how they can be best used," said Annette Baumeister, head of material and color design at BMW, in a statement.

"In the process, we are creating unique seats with a whole new aesthetic that also prompts discussion," Ms. Baumeister said. "It is important to have a dialogue about this, for example to define New Luxury.

"We focus on value, quality and modernity."

Sustainable future

The automaker, while not the first to the growing vegan interior trend, is looking to be the industry leader in it and pave a new path for the company into the future.

BMW announced its intention to become a carbon-neutral operation by 2050 in 2021. These new interiors are a big step toward that goal, thanks to the significant reduction in emissions that the materials will provide.

Vegan in 2023

We're launching our first vehicles featuring 100% leather-free interiors this year using innovative materials with leather-like properties: <https://t.co/hRRFcUBhUF#BMWGroup #ReImagineToday #sustainability pic.twitter.com/e6AXvAKzkC>

BMW Group (@BMWGroup) April 26, 2023

Mercedes-Benz similarly unveiled a concept car in collaboration with *Avatar: The Way of Water* in November 2022 that also featured a vegan interior ([see story](#)).

The materials for BMW's innovation were developed to have the same level of quality and feel as the traditional leather seats and steering wheels that consumers are accustomed to.

"The steering wheel of the future, made of high-quality vegan surface material, meets the outstanding expectations of a premium brand and its customers and is equivalent to leather in terms of feel, appearance and functionality," said Uwe Khler, head of body, exterior and interior development at BMW Group, in a statement.

Thanks to the implementation of the vegan leather, the vehicles using it will be made up of less than 1 percent of trace animal products. Gelatin and beeswax will still be used for wax components such as protective coating and lanolin.

Recently, it was also announced that BMW would return as the official automotive partner of the upcoming Cannes Film Festival ([see story](#)). At the event, BMW is providing guests with a fleet of electric vehicles in yet another sustainable push.

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